

An Exhortation to Youth to prepare for Judgment.

A
SERMON
Occasion'd by the Late
REPENTANCE
AND
FUNERAL
OF
A Young Man,

Deceased September 29. 1681.

ECCLES. I. 12.

*Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, while
the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou
shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*

LONDON: *Shower (7-1)*

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THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON

SERMON

ON THE

REPENTANCE

AND

RENEWAL

OF

THE HEART



By the Rev. Mr. [Name]

LONDON

Printed by [Name]

T O

John Bawdon Esq.

S I R,

IF either the Preaching or publishing of the following Sermons, may be any way useful to promote the great design of doing good; if the seriousness of the Subject, or the weight of the Instance that gave occasion to it, may awaken any one Soul to prepare for his final judgment: I know you will heartily rejoyce and bless God with me; and as readily pardon my defects in the management of so important a Theme: and the rather, since I indeavoured only to convince and perswade an attentive Auditory, (consisting mostly of young persons) without the least intention of appearing in Print; as knowing very well, that what may be acceptable to a Christian ear, when pronounc'd from the Pulpit, doth often fail of being so, when perus'd afterwards by a critical eye. However, the Impression once consented to, I ought to address it to no other name

122
but yours; being Conceive'd and Born in your House, as well as Preacht in your hearing; especially, when 'twas proper for me to prefix an example of the Connexion between seriousness and chearfulness. For having discours'd somewhat concerning the Mirth and Joy of a Christian Life, as well as of the unreasonableness and vanity of sensual pleasures; it seem'd necessary to confirm that Truth by a lively Instance: And were there nothing else to recommend the practice of Godliness, but that tranquillity and peace of mind, that calmness and serenity of spirit which follows a good Conscience, and is the only true ground of a chearful conversation; the argument were very pressing. But I need not mention this, save to let you see the excellency of your choice, and thereby incourage others to make the same. And none, Sir, that understand my obligations to you and to your excellent Lady, will judge me guilty of the usual flattery incident to such Dedications; if I take this first opportunity to avow my Debt of Gratitude and Honour to you both. And such I must profess it, as is exceeded only by the Duty owing from Children to their natural Parents; my loss of whom, your respects and kindness have in great measure undeservedly supplied.

I have

I have only to add, that as the mention of your Name will doubtless invite many to read the Sermon, who would otherwise be apt to throw it by; so, I am told, I shall lose other Readers, by concealing that of the person, on whose account it was Preacht. To which I have this to say, that his name and quality, his life and Conversation, the circumstances of his sickness, and his temper and expressions on his deathbed, are sufficiently known; to obviate the least insinuation of a Forgery, as to what I have related concerning him. And as to what I have not recited, the Readers benefit would be as unconcern'd in the publication, as his curiosity is like to be dissatisfied, if he expect any other Reason of its concealment.

I am,

Honoured Sir,

Your most Affectionate,

Most obliged,

Humble Servant,

JOHN SHOWER.

TO THE
READER.

WE reckon it a piece of justice to the Author of this Sermon, to believe, and (according to that belief) to testify, that the occasion it self did against his own inclination extort from him the publication of it.

For when the conflict was only between the Modesty due (indeed) to his years on the one hand, and sense of Duty on the other (upon the concurrence of a general Obligation, and a present discerned opportunity to promote the eternal good of Souls) the determination of the matter this way could not seem difficult to an impartial, unbribed Conscience.

Whither the Discourse it self, the occasion, and all circumstances taken together have any aptness to serve that end, must be left to the Judgment of such, as shall read, and consider; with whom

whom the Discourse must speak for it self. And what it had reference to, will; we cannot doubt, appear not very considerable only, but be highly grateful also to all Pious and Good men. For tho' the Sermon import a relation to a Funeral, the Death of the Person had nothing in it so mournful, as his Repentance to Life will have with it of Satisfaction, and thanksgiving to God, with all, that are of a Serious, and Religious inclination.

Nor can it enter into our thoughts, that any, to whom that Character belongs, will behold the instance of a Soul (as Christian Charity will believe) rescued out of the Snare of the Devil, and translated to Eternal Bliss with a slight, or much less with an evil eye; only because it was not by their means, or not by one, in all things, of their mind and way. Or that what is the Joy of Angels, can be the Offence, and Grief of good men.

It is surely not possible, they can be so fatally divided between Paul, and Apollo, and Cephas, as utterly to forget our higher common Relation to Christ! For do we not all know, we were Baptized into his Name, and not of this or that (imagined) head, or Master of a Sect?

But though that transcendent Relation be not quite

quite forgotten, there is too much cause to apprehend, and lament that it is not remembred, and considered enough. And to reflect on it as one provoking cause of God's with-holding his Spirit, in so great part, from the Ministry of his word; and of the consequent paucity of Conversions, and abounding wickedness of the time; that there is so great a proneness, in many, to subject the sacred Ministry to the serving of some private mean design, more than that of the common Christian Cause, and Interest; to proselite men to themselves, rather than Christ, and make them more exact Formalists of their own Mould and Fashion, rather than good Christians. To teach them rather to deny or embrace this or that frame, and set of Rites and Ceremonies, than to deny ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World. And more earnestly to inculcate, and press upon them the things wherein we differ, than the unspeakably greater, and more momentous things, wherein we are agreed; and whereof the Dead, Carnal, dissaffected heart of man far more needs the most earnest inculcation.

*It may well be apprehended the Holy God
will*

will be jealous in this case. And while we heartily joyn not, and do not accept and rejoyce in each others help and concurrence (though in somewhat different methods, which for the present we cannot give remedy to) in the pursuit of his ends, we have no reason to think it strange, if he leave us to labour in the Fire, and weary our selves, to no purpose, in the pursuit of our own.

But let us make it our business to recover as many Souls as we can to God; and when any are regain'd, and born anew (according to that ancient Idea of having all Children taken for the Children of the Common-wealth) let us, whoever was the happy instrument, account they are neither mine, nor yours, but the Children of the Christian Church, of the Common-wealth of Israel, the Sons of God, and a part of the Redeemers Seed. How great will the common Joy be upon all such occasions! And God will rejoyce over us all, to do us good with all his heart, and with all his Soul, and to use us for the doing of much.

His Co-operation and Blessing may then be cheerfully expected, when our united strength and endeavour is aimed all one way; and directed to ends great and noble, worthy of God,

222
and which he will not disdain, or count it dishonourable, and unfit to concur unto.

It will surely one day come to this. Nor is it to be despaired of, but that the late work of God's Grace upon this young man (though since prematurely taken away) may be the earnest and pledge of more, of the same blessed kind; and this Birth, part of the first Fruits of a Pious Generation to succeed; wherein Religion shall live, and be transmitted in greater rigour, to them that shall come after.

Our hope lies mostly among such. And we earnestly desire you that are young, and in the prime of your age and strength, seriously to consider, how much the stress of a Religious Interest for future time in England depends upon you. Which that you may to better purpose; consider also, how much you, more peculiarly, have of present hope in your own case. God hath a kindness for your Age; makes his first applications to you, at your entrance upon the common affairs, and business of humane Life, that you would then bethink your selves of him, as your Creatour, and consider how you came into the World: whence it would not be difficult to collect for what. He covets the beginning of strength, his Soul desires the

the first ripe fruits. And you have reason to be confident, that what he seeks, he will accept, if you consecrate them to him (as the first fruits were the sacred devoted part.)

Some of you may perhaps, already discern in your selves vicious inclinations; but your vices are not yet so deeply rooted, nor are so fixedly habitual, as theirs, who are grown old in Sin and estrangement from God. You have not so oft grieved his good Spirit. You have not resisted so many checks of Conscience, nor stifled so many convictions, as many others have.

You have a merciful God to deal with. Those are his own words, Prov. 1. 23. (and spoken more especially to such as you, as you will see, looking back to v. 4.) Turn ye at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit to you. Unto that great God, the Maker and Lord of Heaven and Earth, you have been solemnly devoted. Consider how great and awful names, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost were in your Baptism, named upon you! You are as truly obliged hereby, as you are to your natural Prince; though, perhaps you have not, as yet, taken, in your own Persons, the Oath of Allegiance. You would think it a reproach, and

it would probably prove a ruin to you, to begin your course of commerce in the world; with Treachery and Falshood. Is it more Just, or Prudent, and Safe, to deal deceitfully with your God, than with men?

Do not think he is to be less the object of your Love, Fear and Obedience, for that you see him not; How many Subjects in England have never seen the face of their King? and are they the less bound to be Loyal and Obedient? And how are you bound, but for the sake of this invisible Lord, and in him?

You have, not seen your own Soul, (or whatever you will call the vital Principle in you) which yet you are sure you have; for can you not distinguish your living body from a dead? are you not sure you live? and do you not love your own life, tho' you have not seen the very Principle it self, which you live by? the God you have not seen is as near you. In him you live, move, and have your being. You have great encouragement and obligation to seek the Lord, that you may even feel, and find him out, who is so little far from any of you. You are his Ofspring, as the Holy Apostle tells you, in the words of an Heathen, that you might understand it to be no new,

Act 17.

new, or strange notion; but, even then, ancient and common. He is the Author and Parent of your Life and Being. It is unnatural to affect distance and strangeness to your own Father. It is through the high excellency of his nature, that you see him not. And he is the object therefore of your more excellent faculties. You have a mind capable of knowing him, and a will of choosing him for your God, if they were made pure, and holy, and aright directed towards him, which his Grace, and Spirit can soon effect in you, when you seriously seek, and rely upon them.

'Tis of greatest concernment to you, to have his Favour, in whose Power you are, and in whose Hand your Breath is. And can you be exempt from his Power, who made you, and all things? if you doubt whether he can dispose of you, reward or punish you, was not the making of this World a greater thing? you cannot be so imposed upon, if you use your understandings, as to be made believe, that it made it self. For could you, if you were not, make your selves? and were it easier for all things, than for you?

And you may sensibly perceive, if you will but reflect, and use your thoughts, that you are Subject to a Superiour, Over-ruling Power, that there is
a Lord

101
a Lord over you, and that you live not according to your own wills. For are you never sick against your wills, or in pain against your wills? and do you not know you must one day dye, tho' you be never so unwilling? is it not better to have that mighty Lord your Friend, than your Enemy? in his Favour is life. And he is in a Redeemer-reconcilable to you. Read seriously, 2 Cor. 5. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Kingdoms and Nations are thrown into confusion, if he be displeased, and no course be taken for seasonable reconciliation. ★ And can you stand before his anger? he hath long been England's God, your God, and your Forefathers. Do not you, in your own minds, esteem that wise and sage counsel, thy Friend, and thy Fathers Friend, forsake thou not. ★ How much more thy God, and thy Fathers God! It lies upon you, whether he shall continue the God of England! The parental right derived unto young ones, continues the visible relation, while their nonage lasts, and incapacity to treat and capitulate for themselves. But can you think, when you are capable, your interest by your Parents can avail you any thing against your own personal rejection of God? No, not tho' Abraham were your Father, if you

*Jer. 18. 7.
8. 9, 10.*

*Pro. 27.
10:*

you should finally shew your selves rather a generation of Vipers: Which we have great hope God will mercifully forbid.

But if Englands Youth should generally (tho' not all at once, as they come not to be such all at once) against their Baptismal Vow, cast off God, here is an intercision of the line, and an end of the relation between God and us. If therefore you love your Country, you will love God, and study to please and serve him with your whole heart.

If you love your Prince, you will do so; for would you have him to be (yea would you make him ?) the Head of a destitute People, forsaken of God?

And how would you propose to your selves to live your days, and spend your time in the World, without God? What, in eating, and drinking, and pleasing your Flesh till you dye? would you not take it for a scorn, and ignominy to you, if one should tell you, you were born for no higher purposes? and are capable of no higher?

But how dare you think, without knowing, and becoming specially related to the God of your lives, of dying, and passing into an unknown World?

World? *Peruse seriously the ensuing discourse*
(~~but we no longer detain you from it~~) which if
it signifies any thing to your better preparation
for Death and Judgment; and (in Order there-
to) to your holy, and more useful, comfortable
life on Earth; It will answer the Authors De-
sign, and (with his) the desires and prayers of

Your Affectionate Friends and

Servants in our Lord.

JOHN HOW.

V. ALSOP.

ERRATA.

Page 6. l. 2. r. grateful, p. 11. l. 9. r. have right, p. 12. l. 29. dele did, l.
last, r. of a, p. 17. l. 45. r. differences, p. 19. l. 23. lad ye, p. 21. l. 16. r.
younger years, p. 24. l. 29. add to, p. 31. l. 2. dele and, p. 3. l. 7. r. exquisite
p. 32. l. 5. r. momentary.

A

Funeral-Sermon.

Ecclesiastes XI. 9.

Rejoyce, o young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Notwithstanding our manifold advantages for serious Religion in our younger years, and the contrary inconveniences of deferring it to old Age or an indefinite hereafter; our frequent warnings by the death of others, to provide for our own, and the unspeakable hazard of a sick-bed Repentance; yet how apt are most persons, in their youth and strength, to forget their Creator and themselves too! to indulge to carnal mirth and sensual delights; as supposing, by a fatal prejudice and mistake, That obedience to God would introduce melancholly, destroy the chearfulness of conversation, and spoil the sweet-

B

ness

ness of human life, and thereupon refuse to bestow a serious thought about Religion and another World, till God by sickness, or an hasty death, summon them to appear before his Bar: Upon which account it cannot be thought unnecessary or unseasonable, upon all occasions, to mind young persons of their sin and duty, their snares and dangers, their latter end and final judgment.

What at this time directed my thoughts to such a subject, is not unknown to divers present, viz. *The death-bed Repentance of a young man lately deceased*, who for some time past attended this Lecture, I hope, at length, with some seriousness and profit, tho' at first he came only with a design to carp and scoff, as with great remorse he told me in his last sickness.

And therefore, if there be any now come hither upon the same errand, and with the same thoughts, I pray God command their attention; (for otherwise it would be in vain for me to beg it) and accompany his own Word with a powerful efficacy to their hearts; to convince their judgments, and persuade their wills, and awaken their Souls, that they may go away with other apprehensions and resolutions than they came hither, as *this deceased Penitent* once did; whose Repentance and Funeral calls loudly to us all to consider this Apostrophe of the *Wise man* in the Text, *Rejoyce, o young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.*

For the coherence of these words with the preceding Verses, we need only observe, that *Solomon* in the former Chapters, having given many excellent rules for the quieting of our minds, and the comfort of our lives, under all that vanity which he pronounc'd upon this World, he comes

comes in this Chapter to exhort us to prepare for another. For when all is done that can possibly be effected in order to a contented and a happy life; yet he tells us, that our life itself is vain and transient, our death inevitable, and that *the days of darkness will be many*, *vers. 8.* and then confutes that unreasonable inference, which the young Epicure is too prone to make from such premises; deriding his foolish pretence and plea, by an *Ironie*: and yet endeavouring to awaken his Conscience, by declaring the certainty of an after-reckoning, and by a solemn citation of him before Gods Tribunal. For to this purpose, we may suppose the young sensualist to retort the Argument, "Are all things vain? Is life uncertain, and death and darkness near? let me then enjoy the light as long as I can, let me indulge my appetite and please my senses, and gratify my lusts, and make the best improvement of this vain, this short, uncertain life. Have I but a little time in which to enjoy this world? Let me not make it shorter by a Stoical reservedness; let me not lose this day, least I never have another; but eat and drink for to morrow I may dye."

To which supposed Objection, the *Wise man* answers, in the Words I have read, *Rejoyce, o young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, q. d.* "Let it do thee good, and bring thee joy, be as merry as thou canst, and take all the satisfaction thy lusts can procure; if thou think it best, and most adviseable to do so. *Walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes. q. d.* "Being resolved upon a short life and a merry, baulk nothing which thy lust doth desire; deny thy self nothing thy foolish heart can wish, or thy sensual appetite may crave. But know for certain, a day of reckoning is at hand, when God will call thee to an account for

"thy sensual lusts and youthful follies: However now
 "thou maist stifle the convictions of thy Conscience by
 "repeated debauches and lewd company; however now
 "thou maist make a shift to drown the sentiments of a
 "reasonable Soul by the noise of riot, or bring the plea-
 "sures of the *flesh* to banish the presaging fears of thy
 "immortal *spirit*: however now thou maist flatter or
 "delude thy self by the principles of a *Sadducee*, or please
 "thy senses by the practice of an *Epicure*; yet for all these
 things God will bring thee to judgment. q. d. "Whither
 "thou wilt or no, a scrutiny shall be made into thy past
 "actions, and an account must be given of thine ill-spent
 "life: and for all the vanities of thy *youth*, and the sen-
 "sual pleasures that now entice thee; God, a terrible
 "and a righteous God will bring thee to his judgment-
 "Seat.

And it follows, v. 10, *Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart,* (by avoiding sin, which is the cause of sorrow) *and put away evil from thy flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.*

From the words may be collected these Three General Heads of Discourse, as comprehensive of the sum of the Text.

1. In that *Solomon* makes use of an *Ironie*, and so in mockery and derision bids the young man rejoice, we may take notice, that *sinful mirth, and sensual pleasure, is no real and substantial joy, fit for a wise man to choosa.* It hath but the appearance and the name of joy, for what is truly so, is nowhere to be had, without the fear of God, and the faithful keeping of his Commandments.

2. In that he directs his discourse to the young man in particular, we have a plain intimation; that young persons of all others, are most apt to lay aside the fear of God, and
 for-

forget their Creator, through the temptations of sensual pleasures and youthful lusts.

3. Because he tells the young man, that even *He must come to judgment*, as an argument most proper to damp his carnal mirth and jollity, and put a check to his pursuit of youthful Lusts. We may hence observe, in what respects the consideration of a future judgment hath any force of Argument to perswade young persons to stop in their course of sin, and to remember their Creatour in the days of their youth.

As to the first, I shall divide it into Two Branches, and so consider, 1. *That the carnal mirth of sinners hath but the appearance and name of joy*: being exprest by an Ironie, while on the contrary, they meet with trouble, and sorrow, and dissatisfaction in pursuit of their lusts.

2. *That the life of a serious Christian, in the fear of God and the keeping of his Commandments, is the only chearful and merry life.*

1st. *That sinful mirth and sensual pleasure hath but the appearance and name of joy.* Doubtless the thought of Joy carrieth Argument with it to allure, as that of sorrow to dissuade; on which account we are commonly averse to serious practical Religion in our younger years, as supposing it would interfere with all the pleasures of human life, and doom us to a perpetual mourning melancholick state; whereas the Irony in the Text may let us know, That while we walk in the way of our own hearts, and in the sight of our eyes, we deceive our selves with the shadow of Joy, and the name of Mirth.

'Tis true, he bids the young man here rejoice, and let his heart cheer him; but it is in perfect scorn and derision, as knowing well that all his mirth and chearfulness must be false and spurious, vain and causeless, less in quantity and worse in quality, than the rejoicing of an upright Christi-

an.

an. For as to sensual mirth, so greatful and infecting to the generality of youth, either it depends upon their
 Prov. 23. Company, which sometimes begets quarrels and wounds
 29. without cause, or proves not suitable to their humour; or
 else ariseth from a particular temper of Body, heighten'd
 by meats and drinks, and more than ordinary Diet; (and
 so hath more of the *Beast* than of the *Man*;) and by consequence, must needs be of a short continuance: or else
 is the sole effect of youth, and so will undoubtedly decay,
 as they advance in Age. However it is in it self contemptible and base, as leigned and not sincere, as appearing and not real, as vain and without foundation, as irrational and without a cause: and not contemptible only in it self, but likewise in relation to the *Subject*, the inferior part of *Man*: and much more in reference to the *Object* of their carnal mirth, when 'tis not only sensual, but forbidden too; and as truly so in regard of the *Duration* also, since it is easily disturb'd, and quickly gone.

How can it be imagin'd that a course of sin can give a *Man* any solid mirth! when the *Men* themselves are at such a vast expence of care, and pains, and trouble, of unavoidable fear, and shame, and anxious thoughts; either to contrive, or to accomplish, or to conceal their wicked purposes and practices? so that I need not ask that question concerning the joy of the *Epicure*, which *Job* doth
 Job 27. 8. of the *Hope* of the *Hypocrite*, what is it when *God* shall take away his *Soul*? But in the mean time, what is it now? what mirth and joy have they for the present? who must rack their brains, and stretch their fancies, and employ their most solicitous and concerned thoughts, how to make provision
 Rom. 13. for their lusts; and then must baffle their reason, and de-
 14. bauch their Consciences, actually to enjoy them. For oftentimes a troublesome Conscience lays many rubs in
 their

their way, which they know not how to remove; starts so many objections, which they cannot answer; makes so many doubts and Scruples, which they know not how to resolve and overcome; that if they will venture upon the sin, it must be even in despite of themselves.

Sometimes the very contrivance of their sins gives them sufficient uneasiness and trouble to spoil their mirth; such previous thoughtfulness being necessary to frame the model, to fix the time, to design the manner, and to order the circumstances of some impieties; and sometimes the wickedness *it self* is its own punishment.

Look upon the young sinner swelling in pride, or burning in lust, or drowning in sensuality; consider him racked with impatient desires, and burthen'd with unavoidable fears, least his attempt be unsuccessful, or least he be disappointed in the secrecy of the enjoyment, and his shame and folly publish'd to the world: And yet this is the merry life of the sensual *Epicure*!

Besides, when, by a custom and continuance, in sin, the Devil is in full possession, and Lust upon the Throne; what *Tyranny* doth it exercise? and what a *blind obedience* must the sinner yield? How often are you forced to declare, that you approve of that, which your mind condemns? how often do you subscribe to that as true, which you know to be false? and so run headlong against the light of nature, and the checks of Conscience, and surrender Soul and Body and all, to the will of Satan, and the command of an imperious, domineering Lust?

Now, what mirth or joy can consist with such a servitude? yea, while you *weary your selves to commit iniquity*, Jer. 9. 5. what frequent vexations do you meet with from the disappointment of your hopes; finding sorrow, where you look'd for joy; an offensive stench instead of a perfume; and

and a noisom weed in the room of a flower? Still something more, and further, is thought necessary to your contentment, and satisfaction, and joy, than what you possess already: either the *presence* of somewhat, which you cannot obtain, or the *absence* of somewhat, which you cannot get rid of, or the *continuance* of somewhat, which is not in your power to keep, or such a *change* and variety, as you cannot accomplish: And must this be concluded the only merry and joyful life?

Moreover, Let a man but ask you on the *morrow*, what is become of the pleasure of the *last night's* debauch? when there remains nothing but a sting in the Conscience; Where *then*, I pray is your mirth and joy? For when once the heat of your Wine and Lust is over, and you dare take the liberty of sober thoughts, a guilty Conscience will then tell you *your own*, and you shall hardly be able to stop its mouth. And tho' in part you may have wash'd away the sense of former *drunkenness* by more *Wine*; or think to drown the voice of your bosome enemy, the accuser within, by running into jovial Company, and an excess of riot; yet some smart affliction, or some sharp reproof, or some serious Sermon, may set your sins in order again, and make your wounds to bleed afresh: And then *Conscience* (notwithstanding your endeavours to stop its mouth, and smother its accusations) will not fail to lash the *Drunkard*, and stone the *Adulterer*, and make the Lips of an *Harlot* bite like a *Cocatrice*. You *shall* hear its voice, and understand its errand, and feel a mortal qualm upon your spirits, from such convictions as you cannot easily shifle.

But if this be not the case of *all*, because *some* are given up to a *Reprobate* sense; yet how often on a sick-bed doth the agitation of their own disturbed thoughts set all in a flame within?

A Funeral Sermon.

within. When the remembrance of their drunken excesses gives them Vinegar and Gall to *drink*, and makes them once more sick; from that terrible thought, that for ought they know the next draught may be of the Cup of God's Eternal Wrath in the Lake of Hell. When the remembrance of their lustful *dears* gives them the sad prospect and *preludium* of unquenchable Fire, into which they are sinking. When the *echo* of their Oaths and Blasphemies (which *stuck thro'* the Name of God) shall pierce their Souls with an intolerable remorse. When a sad reflection on their past prophaneſs, in scoffing at what is Serious and Holy, in ridiculing Religion, and making a mock of Sin, shall put them into a fit of trembling, from the unavoidable fears of a Judgment to come. Now if this be the ordinary state of their case, as most certain it is, well might the wise man expose their mirth to scorn, and by an Ironie give them leave to rejoyce.

2. That the Joy of a Righteous, Holy Person, in the fear of God and the keeping his Commandments is the only true and proper Joy. And the Life of an upright Christian, the only chearful and merry Life.

Whereas some men have inferr'd, that because there is a Woe pronounc'd in Scripture to those that laugh, and a blessedness to those that mourn and weep: that it is therefore necessary, if we will be serious Christians, that we must be sad and unsociable, melancholy and dejected, and lead a life of continual complaints and sorrows. They might as well conclude a necessity of turning Monks or Beggars, because the Scripture saith, that it is easier for a Camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. For as to that part of a Christians Life, which consists in the contemplation of spiritual things, the infinite excellency and novelty of the objects must

Luk. 6.25,

Matt. 4.5.

Matt. 16.

24

must render it pleasant. And as to that, which consists in *practice*, it must needs be more so; from the encouraging Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Joy of the Holy Ghost; unspeakably more delightful and satisfactory, than the most ravishing pleasures the *Epicure* can boast of. The best of *this* being short and transient, and mixt with some uneasiness and trouble. But the delights of an Holy Soul, are pure and substantial, durable and lasting, rising higher and increasing more by the very enjoyment: not easily interrupted by a change of outward Circumstances and Conditions in the World, nor broken on a sudden by little accidents that befall us unawares; which is not to be deny'd in reference to sensual Joy.

Sirs, who is it, that either is or can be Joyful, that actually is so, or hath reason to be so? If not the upright obedient Christian?

Is not the continual presence of God, the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, and the constant Ministry and Attendance of his blessed *Angels*, a ground of Joy? He may then rejoice. Is not peace with God, and peace with Conscience, and peace with the whole Creation? Is not Redemption from the bondage of Sin, from the slavery of the Devil, from the sting of Death, and the curse of the Law, and Gods Eternal Wrath, enough to make him chearful? He may then rejoice.

If the favour of God, and the acceptance of their persons and services with him, be sufficient reason to dissuade from sadness; they may then eat their Bread with Joy, and drink their Wine with a merry heart; for God accepteth both them and their work.

If freedom of access to the Throne of Grace; if a promise of being granted in what so ere they ask; if the highest

A Funeral Sermon.

II

est assurance from a God, that cannot lye, that all things shall work for good; If to dwell in his house, and sit at his Table, and be related to him as a Father; if to hear his Word, and sing his Praise, and receive the Communications of his Grace, the pledges of his Covenant Love, and the comfortable foretastes of Everlasting Joy, be enough to make them *Chearful*, They, and they only *right*, have to be so: And that in *Every Condition*. Are they reproacht and slander'd? they may yet be chearful, because God will bring forth their Righteousness as the Light, and clear their Integrity as the noon-day. Are they afflicted, by poverty, or sickness, or disapointments in their designs and hopes? they may yet be chearful, and thank God for all the advantage and benefit of his wise dispensations of providence. Are they Tempted by the Devil? they may yet be *Chearful*; because God will shortly tread Satan under their feet, and not permit them to be tempted above what their able. Do they suffer for Righteousness sake? they may yet be *Chearful*; yea, rejoyce and be exceeding glad, and count it all Joy to receive such an honour. For there are promises, particularly referring to such a state, sufficient to encourage them; yea, to make them rejoyce. Do they sometimes Mourn with a godly sorrow? yet may they still rejoyce, since to consider the end and effect of that sorrow, will give it a mixture of Joy: And even their penitential tears do but clear their eyes to look up to Heaven with delight and comfort, and enable them the better to read a pardon.

Psal. 27. 6.

Rem. 16.

26

I Cor. 10.

13.

Jam. 1. 2.

And here it were easy to shew, how their Faith, and hope, and love, how their humility, meekness, and patience, their contentedness with God's allotment, their resignation to his Will, their satisfaction in his Choyce, their well pleasedness with his Order, their preparedness for

every Condition, their diligence in their callings, their moderation in the use of lawful things, and their innocency and harmlessness in their carriage and behaviour towards others, do all contribute to a cheerful and a joyful life. Therefore well might the Plahrist tell us that *the*

Psal. 64. *Righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and all the upright in Heart shall Glory.* And well might our Lord advise his Disciples not to be lifted up with the gift of Miracles,

Luke. 10. *but rejoyce rather that their names were written in Heaven.* And well might the Apostle command Christians to rejoyce (not by an Ironie, as Solomon here speaks to the Young Man, but) in the most real and proper sense, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, yea, and again, I say rejoyce.*

Thus much for the first General.

2. Let us consider, in that the Wife-man directs his discourse to the Young Man in particular, we have thence a plain intimation, that *of all others, young persons are most apt to neglect the fear of God, and be unmindful of their Maker through the temptation of sensual pleasures and youthful lusts.*

Tho' God demand his right as soon as we are capable of understanding it; and to serve the Lord from our youth is but just and reasonable, considering that so great a part of our life is already cut off by our Infancy and Childhood; tho' the longer we delay, the greater difficulty shall we meet with, when ever we set about it; tho' our whole life at longest (as soon as we are capable and as long as we did live) should be devoted to God, and 'tis all little enough, if we consider its relation to our Eternal State; tho' the sooner we begin, the more welcome we shall be, and the more acceptable our Obedience; yea, tho' an Early piety be the only hopeful method to prevent the hazard of a sudden death, and the terrible reflections of old age, and the intolerable pangs a death bed remorse; yet such

is

is the power of Original Sin in young persons; such; and so many are the snares of youth; and those so agreeable to their vicious inclinations; such the force of prejudice; Such the artifices of the Devil; and so prevalent the persuasions of evil Company; they are usually so proud, ignorant, and unexperienced, so rash, hasty, and unadvised, and so easily infected with Sadducism and the principles of Infidelity, so loath to assent to any such premises, whose con- I sign will infer the necessity of changing their present course, that they of all others do most need a serious admonition to remember their latter end and final Judgment, lest through the temptations of Sensual mirth and pleasure, they *put the evil day far from them.*

For (alas!) how seldome do we consider in Youth what we are! and why we were made! or what is our business in the World! and what will be the end of our present course! Whereas one thought of God and our last Judgment, methinks, should be enough to *drown* all other thoughts as the noise of a *Canon* doth that of a *Whisper.*

Sense is so prevalent, and Reason so weak, we are so much inclined to the one, and so unwilling to be led by the other, that toys and trifles, sports and recreations, and the vanities of fools and Children possess our hearts, and employ our time, not looking *behind us*, to what we have either done, or been; nor before us, whither we are going, and what in all likelihood will be the period of our present mirth, and the sad *Catastrophe* of our Youthful lusts.

Young persons will hardly be convinced, but that Now is their season to be brisk, and jovial, having time (as they count) to command, and the World before them; that it is time enough to think of Death when they are arrested by

by sickness, or *wither'd* by old Age; let them be concerned about another World, who are leaving this; their blood now is warm, and their Spirits nimble, their senses are quick, and their passions strong; they will *walk in the way of their own hearts and in the sight of their eyes*; and ordinarily split upon that Rock of Evil company, where so many thousand Vessels at their *first launching out* have dash't in pieces. Besides, their Age is most inviting to the Devil to bend his chiefest forces against them, rather than against Children, or Aged persons? the former not being capable of making a choice, and the latter being fix'd and resolv'd in their way; his principal endeavours therefore are levell'd against Youth, to draw off their hearts from God and Holy things, and to divert their thoughts from the consideration of Death and Judgment, which would otherwise restrain and check them in pursuit of their lusts: And this brings me to the Third General, to consider,

3. *That for all these things God will bring us to Judgment.* And therein what Arguments the thoughts of a future Judgment may rationally suggest to *damp the carnal mirth of young persons*, and persuade them to *remember their Creatour in the days of their youth*.

And to intorce this Argument I might here mind you of the mischief you will do to others by an ill example, and of the aggravation of your sin by employing the best of your time in the service of the Devil, which must needs make judgment more terrible, in that your final doom, the consequences of it will be more severe.

I might tell you the sooner you repent, the more hopeful is your case in reference to a pardon; I might largely describe the happy influence of an early Piety with respect to the future part of our lives, to direct our choice

A Funeral Sermon.

115

choice, and govern our actions, and prevent a great deal of Sin, and shame, sorrow, and repentance; I might mention the comfortable reflections in Old Age upon a well-spent life; our capacity of greater Service to God now; and our assurance of a weightier crown of Glory hereafter; with all the other considerable benefits that have respect either to a safe and happy life, a comfortable Old Age, and a peaceable Death, or a joyful Resurrection, and a blessed Eternity; all which will come under the Argument in the Text; and what I shall say of it may be compriz'd under the following particulars.

1. Let young persons consider, that notwithstanding their present mirth and jollity, yet the *Judgment of God is infallibly certain*. It is an unquestionable, undoubted truth, that *for all these things God will bring thee to Judgment*.

2. Consider, that this Judgment is *near at hand*, and will *shortly* take place.

3. Consider your summons may be *sudden*, before you are aware.

4. Consider, that Youth and health is the *fittest time to prepare for this Judgment of God*.

5. That if through the temptations of carnal mirth and youthful lusts you neglect your preparation, it is more than probable *your passage by death to this Judgment of God will be very uncomfortable and full of sorrow*.

6. That *this Judgment it self, and its immediate consequences, will be intollerably dreadful to unprepared Sinners, whether Young or Old*.

1. Consider, that notwithstanding your present mirth and jollity, yet *this final judgment is infallibly certain*. What is here affirmed concerning *persons*, is asserted likewise concerning *things* in the next Chapter, *that God will bring every work*

Ecc. 12.

into

14.

into Judgment, with every secret thing whither it be good, or whither it be evil. Methinks I need not tell you, that the Doctrine of this final Judgment is declar'd in Scripture with the greatest plainness, confirm'd by the strongest Evidence, and prest upon the Conscience with the most cogent, and insorcing and Arguments; espically since the pretended Objections on the behalf of the Sadducee, and the sensual Epicure are so weak and trifling, that if their lusts were not stronger than their arguments, they themselves would be ashamed to offer them.

For whoever disbelieves a future Judgment must either conclude that the Almighty God cannot, or that the Righteous God will not call us to an account for what we have received and done, tho' his absolute Omnipotence doth assure us, that he can, and his invariable truth (having declared his purpose) that undoubtedly he will,

And do we think that all the assurance of this Judgment of God; which the Scripture gives us that all those plain assertions concerning the Judge himself, and the persons to be Judged, and the consequence of the Judgment, and the certainty of it, that they are only terms of art to affright the world, and not real intended truths, which will take effect according to their natural meaning; that the whole account is perfect fiction, and meer Romance, contriv'd on purpose to keep the World in due Decorum, and so to prevent some bad effects only in reference to the present State of things, which would probably follow, if this belief did not obtain: Whereas is it not necessary, that there should be a Judgment day, for the conviction and condemnation of great Sinners, that from the Legislative authority of God, and trample on his Government, and are above the check and controul of humane laws: (to manifest the Righteousness of God,

God, as Ruler of the world, in rendering to every man according to his works, and to uphold the honour of his wise Government, whereof Judgment is as necessary and essential a part as Legislation; the latter without the former being little else than shew and mockery; is it not necessary for the vindication of Religion from that contempt and scorn, that is pow'd upon it; Is it not necessary to unriddle the mysteries of Divine Providence, and disclose the secret wickedness of Hypocrites, and put a difference between those that serve him, and those that refuse to do so? As likewise to rectify the mistakes and false opinions, that are abroad in the world concerning God, and Christ, and Holiness, and Sin, to put an end to controversies, and determine the difference concerning what is Truth and what is Error? These and such like things considered (besides the Authority of Divine writ) do morally assure us, that there will be an after-reckoning, and a final Judgment. And methinks one thought of the certainty thereof, should give a check to your carnal mirth, and cast a damp upon your Sensual joy, and abate your heat, and vigour in a course of Sin. For did we but believe that for all these things God will bring us to Judgment, how could we so readily entertain the temptations of the Devil, and fall such an *Easy prey* to his devices? How could so many unhappy *Towns* invade their own Damnation, and snatch it as it were out of the hands of Justice? thrust away their present and future happiness, and fly into the Devils arms in the pursuit of their youthful lusts, tho' they have been told so plainly, and warn'd so frequently of a Future Judgment? How could these things be? if they did but believe the certainty of this final judgment; and how dreadful will be their case, who are not awaken'd till they find it to be so, who will not acknowleg

this Judgment of God, till they know the dreadfulnes and terrour of it, by being brought to their Trial; who will not believe that God will ever call them to an account, till a final Impenitence, joyn'd with their Infidelity, bring them under his condemning Sentence.

2. Consider, that *this Judgment is near at hand and will shortly take place.* As Death will consign us over to God's Tribunal; so childhood, and youth, manhood, and old age, are but several stages that hasten us to Death. Yet
Job. 16. 22. a little while and we must *go the way of all living*: How concern'd and thoughtful to ever now we are about this World, we must shortly bid adieu, and take our leave. Even the Man of *business* must find a *time* to dye, and give an account of his Stewardship; tho' he allow himself *little* or *none* to prepare for Death and Judgment. Our *Youth* and *Strength* is quickly gone, we soon decline and languish into Dust: As soon as we begin to live, we are hastening to the end of our Life. As a Candle, as soon as it begins to burn, or an hour glass as soon as it is turned, doth hasten to its end: (our life withering like a
1 Pet. 1. 24. *Flower*, and passing like a watch in the night.) We must
Psal. 90. dye shortly, and much sooner than they who lived in the
 4. first ages of the World. As Death is the certain consequence of *old age*; so *those Evil days* (as the wise Man calls them) do still *draw near*, and will quickly overtake us. Whether we eat, or drink, or sleep; whether we be sad or merry; whether we talk or are silent; whether we work or are idle; whether we are studious or careless; whether we prepare for Death and Judgment, or whether we despise and avoid such Thoughts: And yet how many spend their youthful days in vanity and sin, with a careless neglect of God and their Salvation, in *gluttony*
and

and Drunkenness, in Chambering and wantonness, not putting Rom. 12.
on the Lord Jesus, nor walking in his Spirit; but making pro- 13. 14.
visions for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. As if this day
of the Lord were a great way off, at a mighty distance:
Whereas our Judge is at the door, and the end of all things
doth approach, and it can't be long ere all the World
must receive their Doom.

A beleiving thought of *this*, would certainly imbitter
the pleasures of sin, would quench our fond desire, and
check our Foolish hopes, and spoil the relish of our car-
nal Joy; would blast the Beauty, and darken the luster
of worldly greatness; would sadden the delights, and
weaken the Temptations of fleshly pleasures. For what
satisfaction can that man take in Jovial Company, in
the pastimes of Children, and the laughter of Fools,
who is verily perswaded, that ere long he must appear
to Judgment? How can he be enamour'd of this *Earth*,
and after serious deliberation be fond of outward gran-
dure; who beleives, and knows, that shortly the *Earth*
it self *shall be burnt up*, the Trumpet of the Arch Angel 2 Pet. 3.
sound, and our Glorious Judge summon all Man-kind be- 10.
fore his Bar, by that Thundring Voice, *Arise dead and*
come to Judgment? And can we grant this *day of the Lord*,
to be not only certain, but *near* at hand; and not think it
time to prepare for our solemn appearance? shall we
contradict our principles, and live in a repugnancy to
our avowed Creed, under the plain censure of No-
torious *Hypocrisy* or folly? The *First* from our profession,
if we do not beleive it; the *Second* from the unsuitableness
of our practise, in case we do.

3. Consider, *that your Summons to this Judgment of God*
may be sudden and unexpected, and overtake you unawares.
When God will require your Souls to appear before his

Tribunal; how soon or suddenly he will do it, you cannot say. The *time* and *place* of our Death, in kindness and wisdom, is concealed from us, that we may *every where* stand upon our guard, and *every moment* expect our call to Judgment: because we know not whether God by sickness will advertise us of our approaching end, or his stroke be sudden by an unexpected casualty. And therefore Moses speaking to the Jews, as to one man, (*Deut. 30 20.*) saith he of God, *He is thy Life, and the length of thy Days.* *q d.* The shortning or prolonging of thy days is in the Hand of God. Hence some are taken the first hour, and some at the third, and some at the sixth, and some at the ninth, and others let alone till the eleventh; but that is a great *uncertainty*: for we may be surpris'd. Innumerable accidents attend us every where, that may blot our names out of the *Book of Life*, and suddainly confine us to the Chambers of Death. It may be *this day* we are Jovial, and in health among our friends, and worldly affairs: and *to morrow* arrested with a Summons to Judgment. In the *morning* in chase of earthly honour, riches, or delights: and in the *Evening* laid out for our funeral, by various accidents not now foreseen by us or any of our friends.

We may be cut off while we presume on hereafter, while we resolve to repent, in the midst of our holy purposes, before they are performed: For tho' we read in Scripture of the *Sinner of an Hundred years old, that he shall be accurs'd*; yet have we no example of *one in a thousand*, that lives to that age. *This young person*, whose funeral occasion'd my discourse, not many days since was as strong and healthful, and as likely to Live as any of us; and 'Tis a very great questions, whether *you and I* may have so much Time and Space to repent upon a *Sick-bed*: as he had, who enjoy'd his senses and the use of his reason to the very last. *This day* therefore cannot be too soon to prepare,

A Funeral Sermon.

21

pare, because to *morrow* may be too late: Every unprepared Sinner being expos'd to as many hazards of Everlasting destruction, as their may be accidents to surprize 'em with sudden Death.

4. Consider, that *youth and health is the fittest time to prepare for this final judgment*: As to the former, if we but reflect on the manifold infirmities of old age, that weakness of body, and that decay of parts which doth usually accompany that state, the hardning of their hearts by a custome and continuance in Sin; the loss of memory and quick apprehension; the want of those vigorous Affections, and flexible inclinations which they had in Youth; which makes it more difficult to convince and persuade them; such considerations as these, methinks should be enough to discourage a delay in our young yerears.

But besides this, how can such persons expect to find acceptance with God in the dregs of their time! after the misspending of an whole Life to his dishonour? for tho I would not discourage their utmost endeavours, and thro' the mercy of God in Christ, there is hope enough to prevent a total dispair; yet what can we suppose should be the substance of such a mans prayer, but to this effect?

“ Lord, I have wasted my days in sin, and sacrificed the
“ flower of mine age to sport and folly, to the provocation of thy Justice, and the hazard of my Salvation;
“ the best of all my Time, I must needs confess, hath been
“ devoted to the will of Satan, and devoured by my Lusts:
“ But I here present thee with the Lees and refuse of my
“ strength and Age, the little fragments, and poor remainder which they have left; I beseech thee, for the sake of
“ Christ to receive me now at last, tho' I did obstinately deny obedience to thy earliar calls, and wilfully refus'd to return sooner: tho' now my strength, as well as my body, is
“ bow'd down to the Grave, and I am hardly capable
of

"of doing thee any Service : deny me not, O Lord, *to live*
 "with thee in the *other World*, tho' I have liv'd so long
 "without thee in *this*. What prevalency do we imagine there can possibly be in so *weak an address*? without a Sovereign extraordinary Grace to relieve the exigence of such sad and discouraging Circumstances?

And then as to *health*, that for certain is the most *proper time* to prepare for Judgment: Let us but suppose the young sinner seiz'd by a fit of Sicknes, if the accuteness of the disease do not influence the brain, and and cause a *delirium*; yet is *that* a time to repent, and make your peace with God, and provide for our appearance before his judgment Seat? for usually the understanding is then clouded, the fancy then disturb'd, the passions disordered, and the thoughts distracted.

Consider seriously, what is wont to be the hurry of a violent distemper; suppose restlessness, through heat, or pain, or want of sleep: or suppose the Physician should mistake thy case: or the Devil use his subtlety and malice to deceive or terrify thy guilty Soul; and then tell me, whether a *sick-bed* be a fit season to prepare for *Judgment*? May not thy thoughts have work enough to struggle with thy pains? or to settle thine estate? or regard thy mourning friends about thee? When thy pulse is low, and thy breath short, and thy Spirits almost gone, thy Sins many, and thy fears great, and thou hast hardly Sufficient strength to get rid of a clot of Spittle; is *that* a time to enter the lists with *Principalities and powers*, and all the rulers of outer darkness? Beside, 'tis the fate of many, the nearer they approach to Death, that the less apt they are to believe it: and so perish in their security, and are totally unconcern'd about a future judgment.

But supposing the free use of Reason, and an awaken'd apprehension

apprehension likewise of what refers to their Immortal Souls, and their Eternal abode. I then add :

5. That if, through the inticements of youthful lusts, you now neglect to prepare, it is very probable, and you may justly fear it, that *your passage, by Death, to this Judgment of God will be very uncomfortable and full of horror*: whether repentance on the brink of the Grave, after a wicked life, may be Saving or no, is not the question. Thro' an extraordinary act of Grace (whereof the penitent Theif was an instance) it cannot be deny'd possible : But when it is sincere and saving, who can tell, any otherwise, than as in charity we must hope the best? For as to the *persons* themselves, on a sick and deathbed, how can they in an Ordinary way be assured of their sincerity? it is therefore probable, that their last Sickness will be very uncomfortable, tho' their Repentance should prove sincere, and their Souls saved in the day of Christ. For suppose, when their sins stare them in the face, and they did never till now bethink themselves of the necessity of a pardon; That Satan should now tell them, that their Repentance doth come too late to meet with that mercy they so long abus'd. And that 'tis all owing to their Fears of Death, and the apprehended dreadful consequences of dying. If he should tell 'em, that the pleasures of Sin being lost, and so the bait to intice them gone; every thing about them looks sad and mournful; and such a change of their condition, from health to sickness, and the Gates of Death, must needs alter their resolutions and thoughts. If he should tell 'em, that the nearness of Eternity cannot but make a person, who hath space to consider, more apprehensive of *another World*, and concerned about it, than at other times; and that if Sickness and Death were at a greater distance, they would still be the same : which

is to sadly probable from the many Examples of those, who have return'd to their *former sins*, as soon as they return'd to their *health*; and left all their repentance, their holy thoughts, and good resolutions, in that Sickbed, where at first they took 'em up. If the Devil suggest such a Temptation as this to the Sick Penitent, who *hath hitherto walk'd in the way of his own heart, and in the sight of his Eyes*, what can he reply, or plead on his own behalf, to make proof of the Sincerity of his Repentance to himself, or to those about him? However, it may become us to consider seriously, that God doth oftentimes in righteous Judgment open the Eyes of *Great Sinners* on a Death-bed; and fill their Souls with an amazing horror from the fears and foresight of his approaching vengeance. When they cannot but apprehend, that their Sinning season is now expir'd; their mirth and jollity over; their final Judgment at hand; and their *Bodies* and *Souls* within a few hours to part, and so be divided between the *Grave* and *Hell*; you will then admit other thoughts of God, and his terrible Judgment, than at present in your careless health: bitterly reflecting on your past follies, in the days of your Youth; and freely condemning your former choice: the serious review of your sensual Joys, (which are fled as a shadow, and vanish like a cloud of smoke) shall give you an-unexpressible remorse and shame; having barter'd away your Souls for such a thing of nought, and ventured your Eternal Salvation for a trifling lust.

“Was my God, my Soul, and my Salvation, of no greater value, will you then be forc'd say; of no greater value; than so easily to be parted with, for the short satisfaction of a brutish forbidden pleasure? must I leave this world I lov'd so dearly? and bid adieu for ever to all its enjoyments? are all my good days past? is
all

"all my mirth and joy concluded? and nothing, but E-
 "ternal sorrows to be expected? must all my mirth and
 "laughter be exchanged for tears and howling? my
 "ease and pleasure for insupportable and remediless torments?
 "must my guilty Soul be thus torn from my body? and
 "from all things in which it took delight? to be drag'd
 "and hurried to a dismal place, where it will hate to live,
 "and yet cannot dye? Must I sport, and sing, and re-
 "vel it no more? Must I brave it out in Pride no longer?
 "and relish the delights of sense no more, no more, for
 "ever?

"And which is worse, infinitely worse: must I make my ap-
 "pearance before my offended Judge, whose threatnings
 "I derided, whose wrath I provok't, whose commands I
 "contradicted, whose servants I reproch't, &c? must I
 "now appear before the dreadful tribunal of this Just, this
 "Holy, this Inexorable Judge? Is there no hope of escape-
 "ing in the crowd, and so avoid a trial? or is there no
 "possibility of an excuse, when arraigned before his bar?
 "or is there no method to be found to evade the Execution
 "of his Terrible Judgment? must I hear, and hear to
 "my Confusion, that Epitome of Hell compriz'd into a
 "Sentence? *Depart, Depart from me ye cursed into Ever-*
 "*lasting Fire*? Oh! what shall I be able to say for my
 "self? when my own Conscience brings the charge, and
 "reads the Indictment, and I cannot disown or deny
 "one Article of what I am accus'd?

All the mercies you have receiv'd from God; all the
 instructive afflictions you have at any time met with;
 all the awakening Sermons you have heard, all the mo-
 tions of *God's Spirit*, and the rebukes of *your own*,
 which you have resisted; all the calls of his Word, the
 warnings of his Providence, and the threatnings of his
 Wrath, which you have slighted; your knowledg of your
 E danger

danger ; your time and space to repent, your former confessions of Sin ; your convictions of guilt ; your purposes to reform ; the reproofs you have had from others ; and the promises you have made your selves ; may all be muster'd up to your awakn'd thoughts, to seize your Souls with horror and confusion, when you are called by Death to pass to this Judgment of God.

And now, Christians, 'tis probable you may suppose and hope that this will never be your case ; yet the present instance, of this *Unhappy youth* may convince you that 'tis possible, and more than possible. For tho' I never saw him (to my knowledg) Save on his Death-bed, yet having express'd his own desires, that others might take warning by his Example, I need not scruple to acquaint you (with what I learn'd from himself, and is well known to his Surviving companions.) that during his health, he did *put the evil day far from him* : and yet was very apprehensive of a future Judgment, and concern'd at his own unpreparedness, in his last Sickness ; most heartily confessing, and that with Tears, that he had indulg'd to youthful Lusts, delighted in wicked company, liv'd in the prophanation of the Sabbath, and made a mock of every thing almost that was Serious. And this notwithstanding the counsels of his Friends, and some checks of his own Conscience : sadly bemoaning his forlorn state, as having little or no hope to find mercy at the hand of God ; and penitently confessing his own willfulness and folly that procur'd it to himself : and thereupon cry'd out in the bitterness of his Soul, " Oh ! had I believ'd
 " and known, what now I do ; I would have been more
 " concerned to Secure my Everlasting Intrest ; I would
 " have taken more care to avoid Temptation ; I would have
 " imploy'd my Time to better purposes : and attended
 " the ministry of the Word in another manner, &c. But

"I fear 'tis now too late. And then with the greatest importunity did beg of God to pardon and forgive him, for the sake of Christ; then tossing from place to place, wringing his hands, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven, (with the affecting vehemence of a despairing Soul) did beseech the assistance of those about him to seek to God on his behalf. " Oh pray for me, pray for me, for Christ's sake " pray for me ; That if yet Mercy may be had , the " Lord would take pity on a miserable Sinner. O my Sins " are a burden too heavy for me to bear ; I have Sin'd " tho' God stood by and saw me : I have Sin'd tho' my " Conscience did rebuke me for it ; again, I have Sin'd, tho' " I resolv'd to Sin no more ; I know not what to do, or " which way to turn, &c. for with such words as these did he bewail himself, and signify the horrors of an accusing Conscience. Nevertheless, for the support of his Relations, and the encouragement of all returning Sinners, I am willing to add, That a little before his change (which was sudden and unexpected, when his Friends began to entertain some hopes of his recovery) his Spirit was more compos'd and calm, his distracting Terrors much abated ; and the overwhelming fears of Death and Judgment very much subdu'd and overcome.

In his confessions of sin, he own'd and aggravated his crimes with the greatest freedom, with a deep remorse of Spirit, and an hearty serious sense and feeling of what he spake. He did not go about to palliate or excuse his former wickedness, to lessen or diminish it, by shifting the blame on the subtilty of the Devil, the bias and inclination of a bodily Temper, the Corruption of humane nature, or the persuasions of *Evil Company*, &c. altho' *this last* he did very much lament, as the greatest snare to his Soul, and a principal occasion of his youthful sins, and apprehended Ruine.

Among other *sins* which an accusing Conscience told him of, *one* that did more particularly affect his heart, and burden his Soul, was the *sin of Lying*; I mention this, with an unfeigned desire, that all young Persons (Apprentices especially) would remember this Example, and resolve against it.

There is *one thing more*, which I named first, and would here take notice of, I mean *his Scoffing Humour*; and *this* he acknowledged with a great deal of remorse and shame; that when first he was an hearer in this place, he came with a design to *droll upon the Sermon*, and *deride the Preacher*: But not meeting with any thing on which to break a Jest, or occasion mirth and laughter, nothing but what was serious, becoming the reverence and awfulness of holy things, and suited to the solemn work and service of a Sabbath, he resolv'd to come again, and accordingly for some time did so, (I cannot say how long) with other thoughts of my Brethren and me, and of the serious plainness of this our way of worship, than his former Ignorance and prejudices would suffer him to admit; and thanks be to God *he is not the only Instance of this kind*.

Therofore I cannot but subjoyn, that as Religion is not the less excellent, because some Fools despise it; nor sin the less destructive, because there be some Atheistical Scoffers who make a mock of sin; neither is plain and serious Preaching, (with the purity and simplicity of Gospel-worship) any whit the more Contemptible, because some that *sit in the chair of Scorners*, deride and run it down; since these kind of Scoffers are usually such as cast off all thoughts of God and an after-reckoning, and are no way influenc'd by the consideration of a future Life; to whom *Heaven* and *Hell* are words of *sport*, and the *Sacred Scripture* matter of *derision*.

For none, methinks, who are serious in the practice of Religion, and make a conscience of their words and actions, should dare to make a mock of the *worship of God*, or those that joyn therein, whether Ministers or people: only upon the account of some little difference, from that method and way of worship, which they like best, when the *substance* and design of *both* is apparently the same, and believ'd to be so. Did men but *understand* what they *profess* by owning Christianity; did they but *believe* what they *understand*; and *practise* what they pretend to believe, a meer Reverence and Just regard to holy Things, would most certainly give a check to this *Scoffing Humour*, in reference to those who cannot in all respects conform to their measures.

6. Lastly, Consider the dreadfulness and the Terror of this final Judgment, in its self, and its certain and immediate Consequences to every unprepared sinner, whether young or old.

When the *blessed Jesus* shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, to take the Throne by his Father's order, and Judge the World in righteousness; when he that stoop'd from Heaven to Earth, to be a sacrifice for sin; that watcht, and pray'd, and sweat drops of blood for you and me; that endured the Contradiction of sinners against himself, in the days of his flesh; suffer'd the Cruelty of men, and the Wrath of his Father, and the Cursed Death of the Cross, upon our account; shall come again as the Judge of quick and dead; we shall then have other thoughts of him and of our selves, than now we entertain.

Sirs, he *now* offers you a pardon, as the purchase of his Death, on easy, honourable, and advantageous terms; But it will be *then* too late, and in vain to beg it. He *now* warns you of your danger, and tells you, that the end of youthful lusts, is Death, and Judgement, and eternal Wrath. And *then* you shall know that he spake in earnest, and his words were true. Now as a merciful Redeemer

deemer, he entreats you to be reconcil'd; he *shall then* be clothed with vengeance, and appear, to your confusion, as a Terrible Judge.

At first he came in the form of a Servant, to make our Peace with God, and was thereupon despised and rejected of men. But he *shall shortly come again*, to render vengeance to those, that would not know him as a Prince and a Prophet, receive his message, and yeild obedience to his Holy Gospel. Now he offers life, eternal life, and begs your acceptance of it: but he will *then* revenge your ungrateful refusal of his offered mercy. Now he entreats you to be happy, and have compassion on your selves: But *then* he will be as deaf to *your entreaties*, as you have been to *his*; and that, though you should urge him with the greatest importunity possible, though you beseech him by the mercifulness of his Nature, by the freeness of his Invitation, by the Compassion of his Death, by the merit of his sufferings, by the kindness of his Sacrifice, by the Grace of his Gospel, &c. Now you will not believe his *promises*; but *then* you shall experience the execution of his *Threatnings*. Now you will not *hearken* to his advice and warning, but you *shall shortly feel* the sad effects of your contempt and obstinacy. Now you will not be constrained by his dying love; but ere long you shall know the power of his wrath, whether you will or no; for though at present he offer you life; yet upon your refusal, he will shortly pronounce the Sentence of Eternal Death; as yet he Invites you to him, but *then* he will bid you depart. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

From that God, after whose Image you were Created, from that Saviour, who redeemed you by his blood, and from that Holy Spirit who would have sanctified you by his Grace.

Depart

Depart from me, and all hopes of Salvation by me. *From me*, and all the blessed Company of Saints and Angels, that shall live with me for ever.

Depart from me, abandoned to an everlasting curse, (of which both Souls and bodies shall be the wretched unhappy Subjects) into *Inquisite Torments* set forth by fire, and such as were originally design'd for the *Apostate Spirits*, of whom the Scripture doth suppose one to be the principal Ring leader of all the rest, and who are therefore termed his Angels.

They who tempted you to Sin, shall deride your folly, and triumph in your Ruin; and be your Constant perpetual Tormentors, since the *fire is unquenchable, and never goeth out.*

Nevertheless, how dreadful soever this Sentence must needs be, it is not more intolerable in it self, than unavoidable to the Sinner: For where will you hide from his Allseeing eye? or how will you resist the force of his Almighty arm? as it will be in vain to think of supporting his wrath: so every whit as vain to Imagine a possibility of escaping it. Will the tears of a despairing Sinner extinguish the fire of Gods wrath, and quench the flames of Hell? will his wishing he had been wiser, in the least avail, when the Charge is proved, and the Sentence past? whither would you flee from the justice of the judge? whither? but to the mercy of a Saviour? But *this Saviour* is now the *Judge*, and become your *Enemy*: A sight of whom shall awaken the most slumbering Conscience, and make the never-dying worm gnaw your very heart: when it shall mind you of the calls and invitations you refused, and the warnings you slighted, revive the convictions you stifled, and remember you of the vows you broke, and force you to reflect on the vanities of your youth, and sadly look back on the time past of your ignorance and folly.

When

When for a light temptation, you run the hazard of this heavy punishment; when for a temporal pleasure you ventured an endless Torment; for a mixt delight, an unmixed pain; for a momentary satisfaction, an eternal Wrath; for a short Sin, an everlasting Sorrow. O *Eternity!* *Eternity!* is it true, or rather can it possibly be false, that after millions of ages, under the wrath of God, it will not then be past the beginning of Sorrows, but an everlasting vengeance will be yet to come, and will ever be to come. O cursed be my wicked Companions that inticed me to Sin, and so to ruine; or rather, Cursed be my own stupidity and folly, that I would not be perswaded to believe what now I know and feel. Oh that I were now on Earth again, and had the benefit of one months space, in order to a second trial! Oh that I had never seen the light, or that the Earth had open'd and and swallowed me up in my Cradle! or rather, Oh that in *time* I had received instruction, and harkened to reproof; that in *time* I had believed what *I was* told so plainly, and warned of so Faithfully, concerning God and his Righteous Judgment.

Now that this may never be the case of any one of us, let me conclude with the advice of the Prophet, Jer. 13. 16. *Give Glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of Death, and make it gross darkness.*

FINIS.



